



Criteria for Selection and Prioritization of Digitization and Preservation Projects

CRKN works with memory institutions to digitize Canadian heritage content to be added to the Canadiana collection. With the goal of making more Canadian heritage content available to both national and international audiences, CRKN and its members are presented with the opportunity to prioritize what material will be digitized, preserved and made accessible within Canadiana. With this in mind, the Heritage Content Priorities Task Group (HCPTG) recommended a process, subsequently refined by the Canadiana Content Sub-Committee (CCSC), to assist CRKN in its consideration of proposed heritage digitization projects for the Canadiana collection. This process is based on Diane Vogt-O'Connor's framework as presented in "Selection of Material for Scanning."¹

In exploring digitization projects, a number of criteria may be considered to determine the feasibility and appropriateness of adding this content to the collection. Chief among these are the following:

- [Heritage Content Assessment](#)
- [Feasibility Assessment](#)
- [Resource Assessment](#)

Heritage Content Assessment

Broadly speaking, content that is being considered for digitization and inclusion within the Canadiana collection should represent Canada in a significant way through its subject matter or authorship. In addition, this heritage material should represent aspects of the geographic, socio-cultural, and linguistic diversity of Canada.

High-level priorities:

In Spring 2020, the HCPTG surveyed CRKN's membership regarding their digitization, hosting, and preservation strategies, priorities, and needs. CRKN members identified two primary types of content to be prioritized:

- Content is reflective of the diversity of Canadians such as, but not limited to, diversity of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, class, and abilities; also under consideration are diversity of time period, geographic location, types of communities such as social, cultural, or political communities, and improving representation in the digital historical record.
- Content is at risk due to factors such as, but not limited to, potential physical deterioration or financial constraints at its home institution.

Additionally, two forms of content were identified:

- High interest archival collections²
- Newspapers

The CCSC and CRKN staff will use the following assessment rubric when evaluating proposals of content to be added to the Canadiana collection. Individuals or organizations submitting content for consideration should prepare their proposal with these criteria in mind.

¹ Diane Vogt-O'Connor, "Selection of Material for Scanning," in [Handbook for Digital Projects: A Management Tool for Preservation and Access](#), ed. Maxine K. Sitts (Andover, MA: Northeast Document Conservation Centre, 2000), 45-73.

² Due to constraints with the current Canadiana infrastructure (as of 2026), archival materials from multi-level fonds, that are not suitable to be presented individually on an item-level basis, cannot yet be added to Canadiana.

How does this material bring unique value to the Canadiana collection?	
Anticipated Audience	
Diversity and Representation Does the material reflect, or is the project supported by (for example, through a letter of endorsement or partnership), a community that is considered marginalized due to factors such as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, class, or abilities? ³ Alternatively, does the material relate to a rarely studied time period, geographic location, or social, cultural, or political community? Will digitizing this material improve representation in the digital historical record?	
Is material at risk?	

Feasibility Assessment

A feasibility assessment involves reviewing project factors that may determine the likelihood of its success. One of these is the consideration of rights issues associated with the collection as well as cultural property or community-held knowledge. This includes copyright and privacy concerns.

Format and technical considerations, including the material condition (fragile or stable) of originals and quality of digital files (for example, outdated formats), will be weighed against CRKN's capacity to digitize or migrate the content. Technical considerations also include the availability of granular metadata that will be integral to the preservation and use of the digitized heritage content.

Lastly, the overall size and scope of the project will be considered alongside the above content assessment and CRKN's capacity to complete the project within a given timeline (see [Resource Assessment](#) section).

The feasibility assessment will be completed by CRKN staff using the scoring rubric below:

³ Marginalized communities may include Indigenous, Asian, Black, Latinx, and other People of Colour; Women; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Non-binary, and other Genderqueer people and communities; Immigrants; Displaced populations; Blind, Deaf, and Disabled people and communities; and Colonized, Disenfranchised, Enslaved, and Incarcerated people.

	High Feasibility (3 points)	Moderate Feasibility (2 points)	Low Feasibility (1 point)
Condition of material (risk to original, image quality)	Materials are contained in adequate storage and are undamaged. Materials show regular processes of aging but will not be damaged by digitization. Condition of originals (or digital files provided for digital sharing projects) are appropriate quality.	Material is in fair condition and is moderately fragile. There may be minor damage to originals from manipulation required for digitization. Condition of originals (or digital files provided for digital sharing projects) may require some image adjustment to ensure appropriate quality.	Chemically unstable; self-destructing, damaging materials around them; posing health hazards. Originals may be partially destroyed by digitization. Condition of originals would result in poor image quality (partially unreadable, poor OCR results). Some digital files proposed for digital sharing projects do not meet CRKN standards.
Permissions	No longer covered by copyright, or licensed for reproduction (proof of authorization contained in application); contains no culturally sensitive materials	Permissions are under negotiation; material is deemed to be low risk	Collection falls under copyright protections and no rights have been granted; material is deemed to be moderate or higher risk
Privacy	No personal information is contained in the collection	Some private information, but approved for widespread use	Personal information is contained in the collection
Metadata	Comprehensive, granular, high-quality metadata available	Some metadata available	No metadata available
Resources required (see resource assessment section below)	Less than 40 days projected for all workflow.	Less than 60 days projected for all workflow.	Less than 80 days projected for all workflow.

Resource Assessment

Given the volume of project proposals for digitization and Canadiana-inclusion, CRKN will assess the resources required for each step of the project (rubric below). The CCSC, with assistance from CRKN staff, will assess the scope and duration of each project as projected by staff.

	Resources required (staff time in days and/or direct cost to CRKN in \$), excluding preservation costs.
Shipping or Digital Transfer	Is FTP or IIIF manifest harvesting possible? If not, assume cost of a hard drive plus shipping.
Digitization	Based on page/image count.
Quality assurance/ image adjustment	Based on condition, format.
File management	For digital sharing projects, file names may require adjustment.

Metadata	Time required to create metadata or to review/adjust metadata for Digirati manifests.
OCR	Time required to process all lots for OCR.

Once all rubrics have been evaluated and discussed by CCSC and staff, projects that best meet heritage content priorities and that have the highest feasibility scores will be selected. It should be noted that cases may arise where certain factors, such as the risk associated with leaving the collection undigitized or the historic value of a collection, may overwhelm other considerations, undermining the rubric approach. In this instance, additional conversations between CRKN, the CCSC, and the nominating organization should occur to address additional concerns and determine an alternative approach.